

## EMERGENCY RELIEF ADMINISTRATION [343]

### DROUGHT RELIEF PROGRAM PROJECT FILES, 1934-1949.

3 cu. ft. and 3 microfiche boxes

Storage is off-site; contact the Utah State Archives to order.

**DESCRIPTION:** These project files document the history of state-wide drought relief projects initiated through Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) grants and administered by state and local agencies. The Utah Emergency Relief Administration (UERA), Governor's Emergency Drought Relief Committee, Utah Rural Rehabilitation Corporation, and State Department of Finance used the records to review and authorize water development and conservation projects, allocate federal funds, manage the purchase of equipment and materials, supervise construction, and negotiate legal title to the projects after completion. The records contain social and environmental information on local communities such as hydrologic and geologic data on the area; number and condition of families, people, livestock, or acres involved; and names of sponsors. Letters from applicants are particularly interesting as they reveal the desperate conditions in which many Utah residents lived in this period, including some correspondence with the governor. The files contain maps, project plans, applications, scientific reports, surveys, legal agreements, cost and benefit analyses, petitions, purchase receipts, construction logs, completion reports, expenditure summaries, equipment advertisements, purchase orders, claims for labor, and assorted correspondence. The Pelican Point Pumping Plant project on Utah Lake, and the Strawberry Reservoir Outlet Works project are two particularly noteworthy projects completed under this program.

A decade of deficient precipitation presaged serious drought conditions for all Utah counties by the summer of 1934. Governor H. H. Blood requested emergency funds through the FERA at that time and created the Governor's Emergency Drought Relief Committee to oversee the UERA's administration of the grants. This committee consisted of Dr. William Peterson, Director of the Utah State Agricultural College, as Chairman; William Wallace, Chairman of Utah State Water Storage Commission; T. H. Humphreys, State Engineer; and J. W. Gillman,

County Commissioner of Utah County. H. C. Jessen, UERA Chief Engineer, served as engineer for this committee.

The Utah drought relief program administered projects conducted entirely by the state and those requested by municipalities, irrigation companies, and community groups. All applications were submitted first to the UERA's Engineering Department, then to the Governor's Emergency Drought Relief Committee for approval. This committee was a subcommittee of the State Advisory Committee on Public Welfare and Emergency Relief. Approved projects were then assigned to one of five supervising engineers from UERA's Drought Relief Division who oversaw the construction of all approved projects. To stretch available funds and ensure completion of the projects, the Governor's Committee decided to dispense funds for materials and equipment only, requiring the project sponsors to furnish all labor.

Further, the UERA retained title to all equipment and materials furnished for the projects. At the conclusion of the UERA program in 1935, title for these materials was transferred to the Utah Rural Rehabilitation Corporation (URRC). This agency created the Drought Relief Equipment Committee in that year to manage the transfer of title from the URRC to the project sponsors. But acquiring full ownership meant that companies, municipalities, or communities sponsoring projects would have to pay the URRC the original cost for equipment and materials. Consequently, the majority of records filed after 1935 concern the URRC's efforts to collect payment from all individuals or organizations involved in the projects. By 1949, The State Department of Finance had assumed responsibility for settling all delinquent accounts.

**ARRANGEMENT:** These project files are arranged numerically by project number, thereunder reverse chronological order by year, month, and day.

**RELATED RECORDS:** GOVERNOR'S EMERGENCY DROUGHT RELIEF COMMITTEE REPORTS, 1934-1937, series 14104, contain the committee's minutes, statistics, expenditures, and lists of approved and rejected projects.

GOVERNOR'S EMERGENCY DROUGHT RELIEF COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE, 1934-1936, series 24307, contains the State Engineer's correspondence relating to his duties as a member of the Drought Relief Committee.

UTAH EMERGENCY RELIEF ADMINISTRATION REPORTS, 1934-1936, series 17943, contain several reports that provide detailed administrative histories of the Drought Relief Program. One entitled "Report of the Utah Drought Relief Administration" gives a detailed analysis of the projects by county, with maps and photos.

STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WELFARE AND EMERGENCY RELIEF MINUTES, 1933-1935, series 2696, contain occasional administrative mention of the

Drought Relief Program beginning in late 1934.

RELIEF PROGRAMS, 1933-1940, series 191, contain reports, correspondence, project descriptions, and various other records from Governor Blood's office pertaining to federal and state relief programs. Further, STATE AGENCY CORRESPONDENCE, 1933-1940, series 14207, and CORRESPONDENCE, 1933-1940, series 186, both contain records documenting how different state agencies dealt with each other and the needs of Utah's citizens during the Depression.

WATER RESOURCES REPORTS, 1912-1941, series 1180, contain a few related reports and maps of Emergency Relief Administration water projects, including drought relief projects collected by the State Planning Board.

**PROCESSING NOTE:** These files will be retained in their present format. Some documents may hold intrinsic historical value, particularly the letters from despondent Utah residents and the Governor's correspondence, and should be preserved. If more original files turn up at some point, and gaps are filled, filming may be considered. This series was processed by Michael A. Church in 2002. As received in State Archives, this series was originally called Drought Relief Equipment Committee correspondence, 1930-1940 and consisted of 407 microfiche cards arranged mostly by "rejected" and "approved" projects. Some missing files in their original format turned up in related series and were merged with this one. These had been arranged numerically by project number prior to discovery. I reestablished project number arrangement for all files to correspond with agency created finding aids.

**PREFERRED CITATION:** Cite the Utah State Archives and Records Service, the creating agency name, the series title, and the series number.

**GAPS:** Originally, the Drought Relief Program maintained files for all UERA drought relief applications they received, rejected and approved, totaling about 1800. This series consists of most files between #750-1600. The whereabouts of project files #1-749 and #1600-1799 is unknown. They may have been destroyed at some point or, since a number of agencies were involved with the projects, may still exist as part of unprocessed series attached to different agencies.

## CONTAINER LIST

Box	Folder	Description
1	1	contents list for projects #1-622
1	2	contents list for projects #623-1221
1	3	contents list for projects #1222-1799
1	4-79	#750-867 [removed four items; box 3, folders 1 and 2]
Fiche 1		#869-1009

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>
2	1-90	#1015-1155 [removed three items; see box 3, folder 3]
Fiche 1		#1159-1249
Fiche 2		#1251-1399
Fiche 3		#1400-1599
3	1	three maps accompanying project files #785 and #788
3	2	three maps accompanying project files #811 and #817
3	3	four maps accompanying project files #1065, 1072, and 1096